



HOLLYWOOD COMES TO TOWN

FILMMAKERS' LATEST MOVIE FEATURES BLOOMINGTON RAMBLERS

FOR TWO YEARS this column has promoted the livable and lovable characteristics of the rambler. Now Hollywood has also taken notice. Last month, four ramblers on Fourth Avenue were the "stars" of the upcoming motion picture, "A Serious Man," by Oscar-winning filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen.

What made these ramblers, and this street in particular, so appealing to the filmmakers?

According to Tyson Bidner, location manager for Big Minyan Films, they were looking for a street to emulate the 1960s-era St. Louis Park neighborhood where the Coen brothers spent their childhood. Most of the trees on Fourth Avenue between East 84th and 86th Street were uprooted by a storm a few



To get an authentic look, homes were made-over with 1960s-style vinyl siding.

years ago. The replacement trees are still very small – as they would have been in the 1960s – making the block a perfect match for the film.

"We were looking to match a 1960s suburban-style neighborhood and this street had great sightlines for the houses," Bidner said.

Another deciding factor was the well-maintained homes and surrounding landscaping, which had to be traditional.

"The pride of ownership was already there," Bidner said. "We knew we wouldn't have to do a lot of work, which is especially important with a lower budget film."

There was, however, some superficial work to be done to the ramblers' exteriors in order to fit the film. Homes were made-over with 1960s-style vinyl siding, second garages, not common in the 1960s, were masked using sod over the driveways and landscaping was adjusted.

According to Bidner, the crew found inspiration in *Suburban World: The Norling Photos*, a compilation of photos of Bloomington in its early development, taken by photographer Irv Norling.



Interior scenes were shot in four different ramblers on Fourth Avenue, including the bedroom of Peggy Knutson's 1954 rambler.

Knutson was excited to have her home in the movie, but said she was more impressed with the crew who worked on her street and home prior to filming.

"It's so interesting to see behind-the-scenes and watch these

people work so hard, from dawn to dusk," said Knutson. "The crew really deserves all the credit. I'll never see a movie the same way again."

Other than the addition of an extra bedroom to the back of the house, Knutson's rambler is much like it was in 1954, which was part of the appeal to filmmakers.

"We haven't changed much because we really don't need to," Knutson said. "Ramblers are the easiest homes to maintain. They should build more of them."

Other locations that will appear in the film are the Great Bear Center at 90th Street and Lyndale Avenue and Normandale Community College.

28TH AVENUE LRT STATION UPDATE

NEW PARKING STRUCTURE ACCOMMODATES MORE RIDERS



A 1,450-SPACE, FIVE-LEVEL parking structure south of the 28th Avenue LRT Station opened in July. The parking ramp replaces a 362-space surface parking lot on the south side of the station that was filled to capacity on weekdays. A grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in August. Met Council Chair Peter Bell, Met Transit General Manager Brian Lamb and Mayor Gene Winstead spoke at the event.

Mayor Winstead said he looks forward to completing the light rail transit in Bloomington.

"The Hiawatha Line has, without a doubt, been a powerful catalyst for both commercial and residential development," Mayor Winstead said.

"We look forward to the addition of the American Boulevard light rail station, being planned just south I-494 at the intersection of American Boulevard and 34th Avenue. Constructing that station will complete the Hiawatha LRT infrastructure as originally planned in our Airport South District."

For more information, call 952-563-8927.

DON'T GET LEFT IN THE DARK REPORT STREET LIGHT OUTAGES



HAVE YOU NOTICED a street light in your neighborhood that is broken or not working properly? If you'd like to report a street light outage, or broken or dim light, you can do so.

Have the location of the light and specific problem you'd like to report ready before you call or submit a work request.

Reports can be submitted one of the following ways:

- Contact Xcel Energy at 800-960-6235 or visit www.xcelenergy.com.
- Submit a work request to *Ask the City* by visiting the City's Web site at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us. Click on the *Ask the City* link, request action and submit a ticket to Street Light Malfunction.
- Call Bloomington Traffic Engineering at 952-563-4913.

RETIRING IN COMFORT

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

NEW SENIOR HOUSING PLANS ARE UNDERWAY

AS THE BABY BOOMERS are retiring, the demand for senior housing has been rapidly escalating in the past 5 - 10 years. The number of senior independent living units totals more than 1,800 in Bloomington and plans are underway for more. Two examples include Portland Commons and Crossings at Valley View.

On 87th Street and Portland Avenue, a developer is planning **Portland Commons**, a four-story, 166-unit, senior independent and dependent living building on the north side of the

property, and **Crossings at Valley View**, a 50-unit workforce housing apartment on the south side of the property. Construction of the workforce housing was recently completed. The senior building is scheduled for completion in 2009.



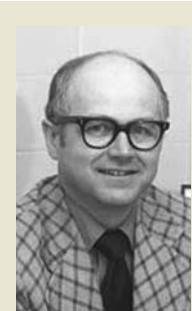
Portland Commons



Crossings at Valley View

A new 24-foot wide street connecting Park Avenue to Oakland Avenue will be constructed to accommodate the new senior housing development. In addition, a total of 129 underground and 223 surface parking spaces will be distributed throughout the property.

For more information, contact Bloomington Planner Londell Pease at 952-563-8926.



**A FINAL FAREWELL
FORMER BLOOMINGTON POLICE CHIEF REMEMBERED**

FORMER BLOOMINGTON POLICE CHIEF James Brekken passed away recently. Brekken dedicated 35 years to the Bloomington Police Department, serving as chief from 1973 - 1977.

After serving in the U.S. Navy, Brekken attended the University of Minnesota and St. Thomas College.

Brekken received the Bush Leadership Fellowship in 1970, which he used to attend the Program for Management Development at Harvard Business School. Early in his career, he developed the first training programs for the Bloomington Police Department.